

**Interfaith Peacemaker Teams:  
A Platform to Build Radically Alternative, Just, Peaceful and  
Sustainable Communities Across the World**

**Strategies for Exponential Growth – Part 1**

*The saving of our world from pending doom will come,  
not through the complacent adjustment of the conforming majority,  
but through the creative maladjustment of a non-conforming minority.*

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

OMNIA Institute for Contextual Leadership is a global network of Interfaith Peacemaker (IP) Teams, building towards a radically alternative vision of pluralistic democracies, inclusive economies and just, peaceful, and sustainable communities.

An IP Team is a community organizing platform upon which participants can build any structure they choose. OMNIA chooses to offer its platform to participants whose values align with theirs. Those who value authoritarian, extremist, exploitative and violent ideologies and practices have many platforms upon which they build those deadly structures. Those who seek just, peaceful, and sustainable outcomes have few. Among those, IP Teams are unique, impactful, and scalable.

Like in any paradigm, the IP Team platform has rules and techniques in which OMNIA will train participants through Basic, Advanced and Training of Trainer levels and other specialized trainings. Once they are skilled in using the platform, they will determine how they will use it, with contextual sensitivity and without outside interference.

The purpose of this document is to build Mission-based and Donor-based Brand Scripts. They provide ideas and language useful to create “Irresistible Value Propositions” for potential donors such that they would be eager to donate. This language can be cut and pasted into letters and documents and used as talking points.

**Mission-Based Brand Script**

**a. Vision and Mission**

OMNIA envisions a world in which religious leaders and people of faith collaborate through Interfaith Peacemaker Teams to dismantle authoritarian, extremist and violent structures in their communities, and replace them with principles, policies and practices that are

- just, resulting in pluralistic democracies and inclusive economies,
- peaceful, resulting in a world without war and violence, and
- sustainable, resulting in the regeneration of the earth’s resources.

OMNIA trains civic and religious leaders and people of faith in marginalized communities worldwide to use the platform of IP Teams to build a radically alternative movement of resistance to ideologies and practices of supremacy -- such as authoritarianism, extremism, wealth disparities, patriarchy and violence.

With clarity about their shared self-interests, IP Team members collaborate to build power by forming deep relationships across diversities, building coalitions among congregations, organizations, and social networks, engaging in strategic actions that arise from the ground up and winning. Public affirmation of consistent victories counters rising authoritarianism, extremist ideologies, and supremacist attitudes, and affirms pluralism, strengthens democracy, and builds just and peaceful and sustainable structures.

To this end, by 2027, OMNIA will train 20,000 peacemakers and form 1000 Interfaith Peacemaker Teams in 20 countries. By 2027, it will be raising \$1 million per year to support this goal.

#### **b. Value Proposition**

A Value Proposition describes the satisfaction a donor gets. It requires identifying the distress a donor feels which will remain unresolved unless they contribute to this cause. The donation (and possibly the size of the donation) must resolve the distress and therefore must be a satisfaction for the donor.

Those who are willing to donate to our cause are those whose values include mutuality. These may come from their religious upbringing, as with those brought up on the commandment “Love your neighbor as yourself” which we must claim as the mantra of shared self-interest, the notion that acting to further the interests of others ultimately serves their own. They understand that another’s distress is their distress, another’s flourishing is their gain. Mutuality means that everyone wins when anyone wins.

Three factors help increase our value: **Effectiveness, Scale of Impact, and Uniqueness**. To the degree that our work produces effective results, impacts increasing numbers of people, and because of its uniqueness, is a scarce resource, its value increases.

#### **1. The Effectiveness of IP Teams**

A Minimum Viable Product (MVP) is a functional product built without all its bells and whistles, and therefore without costing lots of time and money, primarily for the purpose of testing. The current IP Teams may be considered MVPs since they successfully respond to (the previous) more limited vision and mission. We have tested the method and the product based on the original vision and mission and found that they are highly effective in what they set out to do. So far, we have:

- 5500 trained peacemakers, most of whom are religious and civic leaders
- 250 Interfaith Peacemaker Teams
- More than 150 Trained Trainers.

They have learned the following skills:

- how to create teams of diverse constituencies based on shared self-interest.
- how to build deep relationships by listening to the people on the ground.
- how to analyze the IP Team’s power, and accordingly cut issues that are urgent, relevant, and winnable.
- how to organize money.
- how to hold public officials accountable so that they can be responsive to the needs of their constituents.
- how to win and publish their victories so that they can build more power, and in doing so be able to win larger victories.

They have scored the following victories (this is only a partial list):

- In Gombe State, Nigeria, IP Teams have:
  - Received an award for reducing violence in Gombe state from the governor in August 2022. Gombe has become the second safest state in Nigeria. Subsequently, and for the second time, reduced election-related violence.
  - Conducted a successful mass education campaign on pandemic-related hygiene in collaboration with the local School of Nursing.
  - Dug 6 deep wells providing clean water to communities and so stopped the spread of Cholera.
  - Rescued a local bank devastated by Boko Haram, by organizing deposits from customers outside the local community.
  - Rehabilitated two Muslim boys running away from Boko Haram and helped them start a Barber Shop, bringing around them a businessmen's IP Team, which has resulted in 5 franchises.
  - Rebuilt roads, culverts, and schools, provided security to each other's places of worship, prevented numerous deadly conflicts, and enabled its leaders to run for and be elected to public office.
- In Sri Lanka:
  - Reduced food insecurity in rural communities particularly during the pandemic and the economic collapse that followed, by initiating the Home Agriculture Project.
  - Collaborated with labor unions in advocating for and winning a raise of the minimum wage for tea estate workers.
  - Brought Hindu, Muslim and Christian communities together in the Eastern Province in the aftermath of the deadly Easter bombing.
  - Raised money and rebuilt a school, participated in the island-wide protest movement against a corrupt government, built a strong relationship with a network of local government agents and Buddhist temples who have offered land for the Home Agriculture Project.
- In Bangladesh:
  - Stopped forced child marriages in many communities with teenager IP Teams collaborating with a lawyers' IP Team to get results.
  - Reduced violence against women by using the religious leaders in IP Teams to spread the message of respecting women.
  - Reduced sexual predation by subjecting perpetrators to social derision.
  - Raised the dignity of low caste Hindus who are both poor and in garbage worker communities because of the caste status.
  - Repaired bridges and culverts, and planted trees.
- In Uganda:
  - Held a massive campaign to get children to go back to school after the pandemic.
  - Reduced food insecurity by organizing IP Team members to help each other in community farms.
  - Encouraged two women leaders to run for elected office.
- In Liberia:
  - Ran a successful campaign among young people to reduce election violence during the October 10<sup>th</sup> election campaign. They promised on TikTok video: "I promise not to engage in violence during the election season." The video campaign went viral

and large numbers of young people participated. As a result, we there was no violence in areas where there are IP Teams during the election.

- Virtual IP Teams:
  - Participated with Pacific Island students in a campaign to pass the UN resolution on seeking an Advisory Opinion from the International Court of Justice regarding Climate Change.
  - Engaged with Sri Lanka, Uganda and Nigeria on issues of food security

As a result:

- Local cultures are affirming pluralism. Articles in newspapers or stories on TV or radio, and speeches by public officials, for example, have applauded the collaborative efforts of Buddhist, Christian, Hindu and Muslim leaders and people of faith.
- The IP Teams are learning a culture of non-dependency. They are dependent on OMNIA only for training, staffing, and some of their actions. They have a strong sense of responsibility for their own welfare and are working towards independent functioning.
- The IP Teams have built a culture of learning. After every action they evaluate the lessons learned about themselves and their constituencies.

## **2. The Scaling of IP Teams' Impact**

### **A. Take the MVP to Full Production Based on the Expanded Vision and Mission**

- Establish a mentoring system where Shanta coaches the National Coordinators, and they in turn coach their trained trainers, and the trained trainers coach the IP Team leaders.
- Strengthen our face-to-face Advanced Trainings and Training of Trainers to include
  1. A deeper analysis of the political and economic causes of their marginalization – or conscientization.
  2. A clearer methodological grasp on how to hold political leaders and power-brokers accountable.
  3. A module on Entrepreneurship, since participants need to be economically stable to engage in this level of impact.

Such changes require increasing both the number of days and the depth of content in face-to-face trainings

- Formalize online trainings, with clear registration deadlines, fees and scholarships
- Teaching resources will include a podcast, video-based training, e-books etc.
- Evaluate to see if the IP Teams are able to accomplish a deeper level of action.

### **B. Take it to scale**

- IP Teams are designed to scale. The discipline of one-on-one relationship building and amoeba-like multiplication of teams after they reach 20 persons is a critical step in the life cycle of an IP Team. Leadership is nurtured from the beginning so new leaders can take leadership in newly formed teams.
- Each basic training event creates the opportunity to start several new IP Teams.
- We are now in 8 countries: Bangladesh, Indonesia, Liberia, Kenya, Nigeria, Sri Lanka, Togo and Uganda, and have invitations from 3 more.

### **3. Uniqueness of IP Teams**

Interfaith Peacemaker Teams are a radically alternative antidote to rising authoritarianism and the dismantling of democracy, as well as to wide disparities of wealth, extremist ideologies and supremacist attitudes, all of which are increasingly normalized. IP Teams counter this with some unique features:

- IP Teams primarily work with marginalized people. All participants in OMNIA activities are encouraged to identify their marginalization and be the most forceful and faithful voice for that marginality. People who are marginalized find their current reality intolerable, and unlike those who are privileged who prefer the *status quo*, desperately want it to change.
- IP Teams organize people who are motivated to make life better, for themselves and their neighbors. They give ordinary citizens the tools and training to organize resources, voice concerns and needs and change systems and structures that are barriers to community well-being.
- IP Teams primarily work with diverse religious communities. These are among the most under-utilized institutions in the work of peacebuilding. They are present in every little village and large city in significant numbers. They are organized people with organized money, the two critical ingredients for building power. Preachers have significant power to mobilize people, with theologies that compel adherents to engage in peacebuilding.
- IP Teams are focused on undertaking only issues that arise from the ground up. Following one-on-one conversations with people in their communities, IP Team members find an issue that has popular appeal. They analyze their power and precisely define an urgent, relevant, and winnable issue. They undertake only those that fit those criteria.
- IP Teams frequently win. They are also skilled in publicizing these wins in public media. This results in the shifting of public opinion towards affirming pluralism, building social cohesion and strengthening democracy.

#### **Donor-Based Brand Script**

##### **a. Donor's Aspirational Identity and Legacy**

Each donor has an aspirational identity. They wish to be something or known for something more than who they are now. They also want to be remembered for the legacy they will leave behind. Discovering what that is for each donor is a critical step in developing a Donor-Based Brand Script. While this document will outline general ideas, a case must be customized for each potential donor. The following perspective is important to every donor relationship.

We are NOT the hero of the story. The donor is the hero. Like all heroes, they are on a quest to find the key that unlocks the answer to their anxieties and find peace. In this journey, they come across a variety of obstacles incorporating great dangers and epic injustices. Someone tells them of a wise guide that knows how to overcome obstacles and injustices or find a different path. The guide has empathy with the hero because they have already been there and done that, and has authority, because they have already learned how to overcome the obstacles.

**We are not the hero, the donor is. We are the guides. This is a critical shift in attitude.**

Most donors want stability (markets must keep going up) and predictability (tomorrow will be better than today). They also want to achieve their personal and professional goals and get the recognition they desire. Some want to do everything they can to ensure that their children, grandchildren, and future generations inherit a just, peaceful, and sustainable world. News about instability -- market volatility, war and violence, health crises, changing nature of their neighborhood or city, cable news fearmongers etc. -- cause anxiety. They also worry about their inability to achieve these goals (at least, adequately). This anxiety is at the root of their distress.

Most donors think that they are powerless to change this reality. And they are right! In their experience, there has not been an effective mechanism to do so. That is, until now!

OMNIA has a mechanism. We have been there, learned from these difficult experiences, figured out how to overcome them, and developed expertise in those methods and techniques. We are teaching this to people all over the world. The donor can be a part of this adventure in two ways:

1. They can be trained both to transcend their internal inhibitions based on old mental models of hyper-individualism or atomization, and to build power so they can overcome external obstacles. Proficiency in the disciplines and methods of the IP Teams will give them competency to do what they previously could only imagine.
2. Their donation allows others to be trained, and as they are trained, a movement grows that counters authoritarianism, extremism and violence, and promotes pluralism, social cohesion and strengthens democracy. As they are successful, so is the donor because their successes foster stability and predictability.

As a result of the work of IP Teams, the donor will be assured that cultures will shift toward

- strengthening self-determination and democracy in the context of rising authoritarianism,
- affirming pluralism in the context of expanding extremist ideologies and supremacist worldviews,
- embracing inclusive economies in the context of increasing wealth disparities,
- promoting non-violence in the context of expanding wars and rising violence,
- protecting the earth for future generations in the context of destructive climate change.

#### b. OMNIA's Organizational Stability

Witnessing the successes of Omnia's 47-year history, donors can be confident of its organizational stability. It is governed by a competent board of directors which has endorsed financial policies that are consistent with the best practices of financial management and have a long record of audited financial statements by a reputed Chicago-based accounting firm. With care and frugality, OMNIA stewards and stretches each dollar. The organization is fortunate to have an investment fund and a growing list of donors. In addition:

- OMNIA has received a Gold Seal from Guide Star, the nonprofit evaluating service.
- OMNIA's Board of Directors has a Conflict of Interest policy signed by all members and a Succession Plan.
- OMNIA recently reviewed its organizational financial position according to MacKenzie Scott's criteria for donating millions of dollars to nonprofit organizations. [You can read that one-page report here.](#)